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THE PAPACY AND THE MODERN STATE

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More than a year ago, in a letter to the present writer, an eminent French *savant*, M. Alfred Loisy, contrasted the parts played by the Pope and the President of the United States respectively in the war. "Maintenant c'est Wilson qui devient pape, et qui fait la morale aux belligérants, en nous appuyant de son crédit politique, financier, militaire. Vive le pape Wilson!" The contrast was just. "Faire la morale aux belligérants" — this is what we expect a Pope to do. We have been disappointed; it is exactly what he has not done. On the other hand, the President is the one politician on either side who has risen to the level of a statesman, and has gained, not lost, in reputation during the last four years. It must be remembered that he came late into the firing line, and has therefore been less exposed than his European colleagues to the test of time under which so many of them have broken down. But more than any one man now in public life, he stands for the combination of Reason and Energy.

"Vis consili expers mole ruit sua;
Vim temperatam di quoque provehant
In majus." ¹

"Happily," says an English journalist, referring to certain political issues which need not be dwelt on here, "happily, there is America. We might have been the captain of the Western Alliance. She is." ² On the field

¹ Horace. Odes iii, 4.

² Nation. March 2, 1918.

of ethics, it is true. "The moral leadership in the war is not the least of the debts which we owe to the intervention of the United States."³

Yet though the other disciple has "outrun" Peter — the modern state having taken over more than one function formerly discharged by the Papacy — the Note addressed by Benedict XV (August, 1917) to the Heads of the Belligerent Peoples is a notable document. Its effect on public opinion was small. But this public opinion was to a great extent manufactured; as sixteenth-century rulers tuned the pulpits, so twentieth-century party wire-pullers tune the press. The London "Press-Industry," which has become one of the worst features of English political life, started a campaign of denigration. The conductor waved his *bâton*, the instruments blared and brayed in unison; as far as its influence extends, and it extends widely, not a discordant note was heard. That this was so was not due either to hatred of Popery or to love of Protestantism. The "Press-Industry" is above either weakness, and can adapt itself on occasion to either creed. There are springs of action less respectable than bigotry. To large classes of the community the war is a very profitable investment; and, without crediting them with direct and conscious commercial motives, men do not readily destroy that by which they live. It is impossible to overlook the great and increasing mass of vested interests that has been created. Officials are multiplied, salaries liberal, profits swollen, prices high. "Five pounds a week am I making syne the war," said a Scotch "body"; "and there's that auld deevil the Pope wanting peace."

Whatever else he may be or not be, the Pope is the first ecclesiastic in Christendom; and if in human things the actual falls short of the ideal, we need not

³Daily News, April 8, 1918.

assume that the official bias from which the Head of so great a politico-ecclesiastical institution as the Roman Catholic Church cannot, and probably would not if he could, wholly free himself, is such as to make his appeal for peace either perfunctory or insincere. It is permissible to think that it was neither. The spirit in which the Pope's Easter Message (1918) to "the noble British nation" is conceived is admirable; and personally, though his type is that of the official and his genius administrative rather than inspired or creative, Benedict XV is an able, an excellent, and a moderate man. Shrewd, unemotional, silent, he is in every respect unlike his immediate predecessor; he resembles rather Leo XIII, though he has neither that Pope's arbitrary temper nor his large views. A statesman he is not; and he has been described as *un petit, un très petit politicien*. In the notorious von Gerlach case, he was the dupe of a vulgar Mephistopheles—which he must have resented bitterly. It is his misfortune that the situation in which he finds himself calls for just those qualities—insight, inspiration, leadership—that he does not possess. In normal times he would have made an excellent Pope; but the times are not normal. *Consensu omnium imperii capax, nisi imperasset* will perhaps be the verdict of history. He is characterized by a certain flatness; he is neither inspired nor inspiring, and in fact he does not inspire. What he sees he sees clearly; his understanding is positive; he is under no illusions as to what a modern Pope can and cannot do. This is probably why he is slow to urge the religious motive on evil-doers; were he to do so, he would be, he knows, "speaking into the air." The war has been an object-lesson in the inefficacy of this motive. This has been so even in the narrower sense of the word "religion." The sacrileges perpetrated by Catholic Austrians and Bavarians in Catholic churches and on Catholic priests and

religious persons of both sexes have been as atrocious as those committed by Protestant Prussians and unbaptized Turks. "The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy priests with the sword."

The Pope, however, is one thing; the Papacy another. The excuses that may be urged for Giacomo della Chiesa aggravate the case against the Roman See. To those who regard the Papacy as the corner-stone of religion, its "neutrality" in this great conflict between good and evil must, if they allow themselves to think, be an embarrassment. For "he that is not with me is against me." It was for "neutrality" that Meroz was cursed. Never was Authority and all that Authority implies — exhortation, denunciation, correction — more called for.

"Prophet of God, arise and take
With thee the words of wrath divine,
The scourge of heaven, to shake
O'er yon apostate shrine."

The motives alleged for non-intervention are those of human prudence. In the case of the Vice-Gerent of Deity they are not even colorable; nor, to do them justice, does the special pleading of Catholic apologists give the impression of any great enthusiasm or conviction on their part. Not so did the great Popes of the Middle Ages, the Gregories, the Innocents, conceive their office. They would have made short work with the man whose lawless ambition has let loose these horrors upon humanity — "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh." They believed in themselves; and this was why the world believed in them. The world will sit loose to an authority which is not sure of itself; it has no use for a *Roi fainéant* — a Teacher who cannot, or will not, or at least does not teach. That the patience, if not the faith, of Catholics has been tried

is beyond dispute. M. Denys Cochin's letter to the *Gaulois* (April 2) on the silence of the Vatican in the matter of the French hostages taken by the Germans is an example. "Hold not thy tongue, O God, keep not still silence; refrain not thyself, O God." Nor is dissatisfaction confined to Catholics. Those of us even who regard the Papacy rather from the standpoint of history than from that of theology are chilled. For the moral forces at the disposition of mankind are neither so many nor so strong that we can afford to see the disappearance of what was once one of their number with indifference,

"Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great is passed away."

The ground of complaint is not that the Pope is personally indifferent either to the horrors of war or to the interests of peace; Benedict XV is neither; but that he has kept silence, even from good words, when, as Pope, speech was incumbent upon him; and that to all appearance he is blind to the moral issues involved in and raised by the war. He would probably answer the first objection by urging that nothing he could say would have the smallest effect; which is true, but which is an admission fatal to the very idea of the Papacy; and the second by reminding us that his conception of morality and of the good of mankind is not ours. This is so; and it is here that the crux of the situation lies.

The Pope, though the Head of the clerical profession — "in him we see the pretensions, the merits, the demerits of the clerical office in its most complete, perhaps in its most exaggerated, form"⁴ — is a Priest, not a Prophet. This is the secret both of his success in the past and of his failure in the present. There was a time when an Absolute Ruler — Priest or King — was a condition

⁴ Stanley. *Christian Institutions*, p. 220.

of human progress. It passed. The Reign of Law followed. That of Spirit is yet to come. The Papacy is still in the first stage, and by a law of its being cannot get beyond it; the world is passing out of the second into the third. The Papacy, therefore, survives like a fossil remnant of earlier *strata* in a new geological formation; it shows us what the past of the race has been. And if, when we consider its long history, it seems to us that from the first its material side has been more prominent than its moral, we may remember the saying of the historian, that "the natural man is a born Catholic."⁵ Esau is supplanted, not only because Jacob is a supplanter, but because he, Esau, lays himself open to being supplanted, and so becomes the trickster's easy prey. And here the Roman Church does but exhibit, writ large, features which she has in common with the other Churches. The interests of the institution which they represent bulk large before Churchmen. A regard, perhaps an excessive regard, for these interests "is the badge of all our tribe."

The policy of individual Popes varies. That of Gregory XVI was Austrian; that of Pius IX Legitimist; that of Leo XIII French; that of Pius X German. But the Pope is the titular Head of a great international polity which was before him and will be after him; which has its historical genius, temper, tendencies, and laws. Under the surface-waters this deeper stream runs in its own direction and with its own velocity. Chronic and acute as has been the strife between them—for the contention which should be the greater is eternal—the connection between the Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire is intimate. A common interest unites them. Both stand for Authority, and for the Force (in the last resort a material Force) which lies behind it; and Force, as Renan reminds us, "is not

⁵ Rudolf Sohm. Outline of Church History, p. 35.

an amiable thing." Such as it is, however, it is the link between these two great institutions. It is an effectual one. They can neither part, nor live at peace together; they are an inseparable, if an ill-mated pair.

In its mediæval shape the Holy Roman Empire disappeared in the Napoleonic wars. But its spirit survives in the Central Powers. Austria is the nearest approach to a Catholic state now left in Europe; only its preponderance in the Near East stands between Rome and the *terra incognita* of Slav religion: while the third part of the population of the German Empire is Catholic; and the grouping of parties is such as to give the Catholic Centre a disproportionate influence in German politics; its vote turns the scale. These are assets which the Papacy will not easily relinquish; and this is why an anti-German Papacy is unthinkable. This has been the case increasingly since the Congress of Vienna. The Popes of the Holy Alliance were the instruments of the Hapsburgs. For a moment Pius IX broke loose: but in 1848 he learned his lesson, and never forgot it; the Vatican came to heel. The Pontificate of his successor was of the nature of an interlude. Leo XIII, who was in the line of the greater Popes, made France the keystone of his policy in the hope of making the Republic what the Monarchy had been, the eldest daughter of the Church. But this hope was doomed to disappointment; France, which bore with her the fortunes of civilization, was launched on larger seas. He did not, however, abandon it: "Nothing," he emphatically assured the French ambassador⁶ when he received him for the last time before his death, "nothing should make him break with France." The consideration of the "ifs" of history is as attractive as it is unprofitable: had the policy of Leo been continued by his successor, what might not the result have been? On his death, however

⁶ The late M. Nisard.

(1903), the Vatican reverted to its traditional policy. Pius X owed his election to the Austrian veto; the Central Powers were determined to exclude the one man of ability in the Sacred College, the pro-French Cardinal Rampolla; and when the present Pontiff succeeded (1914), the abolition of the Concordat had made relations with France embarrassed, and the conservative forces in Italian politics, of which the Pope is the natural ally, were German at heart. It was not surprising that Benedict XV should have followed the line of least resistance. The incompetence of his predecessor had left the Papacy in a state of dilapidation; he had to rebuild. Had he been a master-builder—which he was not—the war might well have made his difficulties insuperable; for the Papacy is a political rather than a religious institution. It would be too much, no doubt, to say that it is indifferent to religion; it is not too much to say that it is political first and religious afterwards, that policy counts for more than religion in its designs. A genius might have dared and won, both greatly; but Benedict XV was not a genius; he “fought after the manner of men.” For Rome, England is the great Protestant Power, France the great anti-clerical Power, Russia the great anti-Latin Power; Italy is anti-Papal; America is a *sentina gentium* from which, let European politics shape themselves as they will, dollars can always be drawn. Why should it love any of us? It is foolish to expect it; its aims and methods are other than ours. Like goes to like, not to unlike; the Papacy does and we do not “believe in gods in whose name men kill.” Brioux’s famous phrase expresses the situation with exactness. The German ideal is akin to the Papal, and can be dovetailed into it with little difficulty. The English, the Italian, the French, the American, cannot. “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed.”

This gulf is none the less real because it is, in a sense, intangible. For, as M. Emile Faguet has admirably expressed it:

“A religion is not only a collection of dogmas; it is a body of men animated by similar tendencies of conscience, will, and temper. For centuries the Catholic Church has not only been authoritative herself; she has also upheld authority as such, and other than her own. All power is of God; her own first and foremost; but also all those powers, whatever their origin, whose prescription guarantees their establishment — an establishment human indeed but approved by God. So that if it is asked, ‘What sort of people are, or become, or are satisfied to remain, Catholics; or, being — so to speak — semi-Catholics, regard Catholicism with favour?’ the answer is, ‘All, or almost all those, whose disposition is authoritative; who are temperamentally conservative, and opposed to innovation.’ The result is that the Church is the rallying point of persons whose temperament is that of authority. The lover of novelty — the Liberal, the emancipator, above all the revolutionary — gravitate naturally towards liberal Protestantism or Free Thought, or, more frequently still, become unbelieving Catholics, who retain nothing of Catholicism but the name.

“To what then did Lamennais invite the Church? To the abandonment of her historical tradition, and to the sacrifice of the most numerous, the most persistent, the most devoted, and the most energetic of her following. No Church, no party, will for a moment entertain such an idea. A Church is tied by its past and to its adherents, because its past and its adherents make it what it is. I will not say that a Church would rather renounce its beliefs than its general spirit. But it is certain that, provided the discussion is discreet and indirect, it will more readily admit discussion of its particular tenets than of its general spirit. In the one case it can shut its eyes; in the other it is compelled to open them. The Church, mainly composed, as she is, of men of arbitrary and authoritative temper, may come to find herself everywhere a minority; but she will none the less everywhere uphold the powers that be, and desire her adherents to respect them, regardless of whether their form be monarchical or republican. For there is a consideration which weighs more than this with her; that is, the stability of the civil power, corresponding in general to the stability of the spiritual power; a stability good in itself, and in harmony with the desires,

the genius, and the character of the faithful who constitute the reserve force of the Church.”⁷

It is probable that in the first instance Benedict XV believed in a speedy and decisive German victory. He was not alone in this belief; in the Italian army, among Italian conservatives, and in cosmopolitan Italian society, it was widely held. Now he is not sure of it. He would like to be. *Fiat justitia ruat coelum* is an idea beyond his horizon; and powerful influences of more than one order are at work to persuade him that his original anticipation will be realized. But he is too astute to be convinced that it is so. It is probable that he now thinks that the issue of the war will be inconclusive, neither side being able to inflict a definite defeat on its opponent, and that his policy is to keep a foot in each camp. It would perhaps be truer to say that he keeps a foot and a half in that of the Germans; the action of the Canadian hierarchy in the Bourassa controversy shows the direction in which the wind of Roman officialism blows. An enthusiast might risk all for right; a statesman might foresee the triumph of the larger idea and of liberty; but Popes are not enthusiasts, and priests neither love liberty nor move easily among ideas. It is to the credit of Benedict XV that he was a *persona ingrata* at the court of his predecessor. It is impossible to conceive him stooping to that level; he was of another world. But those who have been brought into contact with him describe him as a man rather of concrete than of abstract mind. He sees a number of particular facts more readily than a general principle, and approaches a subject rather from the particular than from the universal side. He avoids the *question de droit*; the positive, the *question de fait*—this is his element. He will not denounce the crimes of the pious Emperors; it would

⁷ Emile Faguet. *Politiques et moralistes du XIX^{me} Siècle*. Vol. II, p. 123.

be useless; and he has an eye to the future; the Hun is a bad enemy, and may still be a useful friend. It is not heroic, but a casuist could probably make a case for it; and the official mind is much of a muchness in all the Churches, which are seen at their worst in dealing with ideas, or with movements into which ideas enter — the clergy, the Royalist historian of the Civil Wars reminds us, taking “the worst measure of affairs and measures of all men that can read and write.” Never has that wise saying been more strikingly verified than in our own time. “L’attitude du Vatican durant la présente guerre est principalement caractérisée par une foncière inintelligence de cette crise de l’humanité,” says the distinguished French writer who has been already quoted. “Pour Benoit XV, c’est une guerre comme une autre, qu’il s’agirait de terminer par un compromis — en attendant de nouveaux conflits — et la démocratie ce pape comprend rien. Ses sympathies sont tous naturellement aux vieilles monarchies, qu’il croit encore beaucoup plus fortes qu’elles ne sont en réalité. Je pense qu’en reprenant la série des actes de Benoit XV il serait assez facile d’en montrer l’insignifiance réelle et l’esprit suranné.”⁸

In a democratic country, such as France or America, Catholics are naturally unwilling to be placed in an attitude of opposition to the form of government which commends itself to the majority of the citizens. Leo XIII rallied French Catholics to the support of the Republic; “There,” he said, pointing to the crucifix, “is the one corpse to which the church is tied.” It was the greatest act of a great pontificate. There is no reason why a Catholic should not be a democrat — using the word in the European sense. The Church indeed is a monarchy, and tends more and more to become an absolute monarchy; but it does not follow

⁸ M. Alfred Loisy, Professeur au Collège de France.

that the state should be so; here it may go its own way.
It was a Catholic poet who wrote the famous lines,

“For forms of government let fools contest.
Whate’er is best administered is best”;

and though those which immediately follow them —

“For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
His can’t be wrong whose life is in the right ” ⁹ —

embody a whole series of condemned propositions, the most rigorous censor could not refuse the *Imprimatur* to the former couplet. For Catholicism has no quarrel with Democracy as such — that is, with government by the community as a whole, as distinct from government either by a single ruler or by a privileged class. The political doctrine of St. Thomas is that of an English Whig of 1688. “As it is lawful to resist robbers, so it is lawful to resist evil rulers”; though, “if the tyranny be not excessive, it is more profitable to endure it for a time than by active resistance to incur graver dangers than those which arise from the tyranny in question.” ¹⁰ In the seventeenth century another line of thought appears. Some Catholic writers, with the Jesuits Suarez and Mariana, developed the theology of tyrannicide. Others argued either (after Hobbes) that the *de facto* existence of a government carried its legitimation with it, or (with the patriarchists) that monarchy had its origin in natural law, and that, once made, the delegation of sovereignty was irrecoverable; in which case the actual community had no more voice in the matter than children in the selection of their parents. Such authors,

⁹ Pope. Essay on Man. Epistle iii.

¹⁰ “Sicut licet resistere latronibus, ita licet resistere malis principibus.” (*Summa Theologiae*, 2.2. q. 69 & 4.)

“Si non fuerit excessus tyrannidis, utilius est remissam tyrannidem tolerari ad tempus, quam contra tyrannum agendo multis implicari periculis quae sunt graviora ipso tyrannide.” (*De Regimine Princ.* VI, 1.)

however, were rather jurists than theologians, and their motives were frankly opportunist. At one time, for example, it was desired to justify the assassination of Protestant rulers; at another to revive the doctrine of the Deposing Power of the Popes; at a third to terrorize pietists into the support of the Bourbon and Hapsburg monarchies. As Pascal put it to the Jesuits, "*Toutes vos démarches sont politiques.*"¹¹ But it is a true maxim of the canonists that such opinions are born — and die.¹² In practice common sense asserted itself. "Though they should deny it a hundred times, kings reign only by the suffrages of the people," writes a fourteenth-century French lawyer;¹³ and our own John Selden — "A king is a thing men have made for their own selves, for quietness' sake."¹⁴ The *jus divinum* of the Stuarts was a figment of the Reformation: "The Reformers did much advance the King's Supremacy, for they only cared to exclude the Pope." In our own time the words of Leo XIII are explicit: "No form of civil government is to be blamed in itself, not even that which gives the people a share, greater or less as the case may be, in the exercise of sovereignty; a function which at certain times and under certain conditions may be not only profitable to the citizens but even incumbent upon them."¹⁵ The limitation "in itself" (per se) should, however, be noted. The Papacy has suffered too much from kings to be wedded to monarchy; but it is irreconcilably hostile to certain features, not indeed of Democracy as such, but of Democracy of the lay type, the only type now possible — to that emanci-

¹¹ XVII^{me} Lettre Provinciale.

¹² Communes opiniones nascuntur, et moriuntur.

¹³ Michel de Dormans, 1383.

¹⁴ Table-Talk LXX, LXXI.

¹⁵ "Nulla per se reprehenditur ex variis rei publicæ formis . . . immo neque illud per se reprehenditur participem plus minusve esse populum rei publicæ certis: quod ipsum certis in temporibus certisque legibus potest non solum ad utilitatem, sed etiam ad officium pertinere civium." (Encyclical Immortale Dei. 1885.)

pation of lay from clerical life and mind known loosely but with sufficient accuracy for practical purposes as Liberalism. In this connection the Bull of Pius IX, *Quanta Cura* (1864) with the annexed *Syllabus*, and the Decree *Lamentabili sane* with the Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* of Pius X (1907), deserve careful study.¹⁶ The proposition that "the Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile himself, and come to terms, with Progress, with Liberalism, and with Modern Civilization," was condemned by the former Pope; while the latter denounces the opinions that "in temporal matters the Church should be subject to the State," and that "the government of the Church, in particular in matters of doctrine and discipline, should be brought into harmony with the modern conscience, *quae tota ad democratiam vergit* — the whole tendency of which is in the direction of Democracy."

It is to Liberalism, however, rather than to Democracy that the Church is opposed. The alliance between Berlin and Rome is *ad hoc*, and would not stand the strain — to which it is improbable that it will be exposed — of a German victory. The Kulturkampf followed close upon Sedan. Perhaps the social order from which the Papacy has most to hope — it appears to be that which it desires to see established in Ireland — is a democracy of peasants segregated from European civilization and ruled by priests. Paraguay under the Jesuits, Ecuador under Garcia Moreno, or the Swiss Cantons of the Sonderbund are examples. The kings of the earth may, under certain circumstances, be the lesser of two evils; but the ideal of the priestly historian is a Theocracy; "The Lord your God was your King."¹⁷ For — here is the thing itself — this Divine King rules

¹⁶ These documents will be found in Denzinger's *Enchiridion*, Edition XI. Herder, 1911.

¹⁷ 1 Samuel 12 12.

through the hierarchy. "Each of the two swords, the spiritual and the material, is at the disposition of the Church; but the latter is employed for, the former by, her. The one is wielded by the hand of the priest, the other by that of kings and soldiers, but at the priest's will and bidding. For it must be that the one sword be subject to the other, and the temporal authority obey the spiritual rule."¹⁸ Thus Boniface VIII.

But the extravagance of the claim was its refutation; the weapon broke in his hands.

"Veggio in Anagni entrar lo fior d'aliso
E nel vicario suo Christo esser catto."¹⁹

The end of an age was in sight. For no modern State is moving, or can by any possibility move, on these lines. "Believe in the Pope?" said Dr. Arnold with his usual directness; "I would as soon believe in Jupiter!" Both belong to a world that has passed away. Such cults linger in an enfeebled form in back-waters, among those who for one reason or another lie outside the main current of life. The worship of the old gods survived among the country folks — (*pagus*, *paganus*, *paganism*); the peasant element is the strength of Catholicism to-day. On these levels both are genuine. Elsewhere they ring hollow. There was an element of make-belief in the neo-paganism of the Emperor Julian; there is a strain of unreality in the neo-Catholic apologetic of to-day. De Maistre, Brownson, Newman — it is brilliant fencing, but it is the fencing of the *salle d'escrime*, not of the battlefield; there is an absence of the real thing. The policy of the modern Papacy is one of shifts and

¹⁸ "Uterque est in potestate Ecclesiæ, spiritualis scilicet gladius et materialis; sed is quidem pro Ecclesia, ille vero ab Ecclesia, exercendus: ille sacerdotis, is manu regum et militum, sed ad nutum et patientiam sacerdotis. Oportet autem gladium esse sub gladio, et temporalem auctoritatem spirituali subijci potestati." (Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302.)

¹⁹ Purgatorio XX, 89.

expedients. Like Autolycus, it is "a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles." Bankruptcy is inevitable; but it can still fish in troubled waters, make small temporary profits, overreach an unwary opponent, put off the evil day. More than this it cannot do. It is *frappé de caducité*.²⁰ It is only on the dial of Ahaz that the shadow went back.

It is difficult to argue from the teaching of a Church to the practice of its members. Religion is one of many motives which influence conduct, and it is not always the strongest motive; men are at once better and worse than their creeds. But Catholicism has in many respects a stronger hold on its adherents than Protestantism; its appeal to the senses and the imagination is more persistent, its machinery is more effective and better worked. The dream-democracy of the priests comes through the gate of ivory; though we would have them otherwise, "things are what they are." But the pressure which can be brought to bear upon individuals is great, and it is impossible to foresee when and where it will be overwhelming. During the Italian *Risorgimento* the Roman question sent English and Irish Catholics into the camp of Continental Absolutism; peasants from Connaught, who would have been Fenians in Ireland, enlisted among the Papal Zouaves. A generation later, when Gladstonian Home Rule was before the country, the Education controversy split the Irish vote in England; the Marriage question may have the same result in our own time. This makes the Catholic vote an incalculable quantity. It is peculiarly liable to be swayed by pietistic sentiment; it is irrational — open to the influence of clerical wire-pullers, of women, of the confessional. A hint, a whisper — and the trick is done. The picture given by the author of *Jean Barois*²¹ is

²⁰ A. Loisy. *Quelques Lettres*, p. 73.

²¹ M. Roger Martin Du Gard. Paris, 1913.

lifelike; it needs a strong swimmer to make head against the tide. There are, no doubt, Catholics who can do so, but they are exceptional. Nor is indifference a guarantee of immunity. The most indifferent have their religious moments — “Just when we are safest, there’s a sunset-touch”;²² and those who identify piety with superstition are often superstition’s easiest prey.

It is these petty, chance, and diminishing gains that confirm the Papacy in its policy of self-seeking; it “minds earthly things”; and self-seeking in religion spells disaster. Its best friends are those who, even at the cost of a rude awakening, would shake it out of its evil dream. The dramatic collapse of Russian Tsardom with its Empire and Church is, it may seem, a gain to the Vatican. Such gains have been before now fallacious. “Are you quite sure he is dead?” is the question put by an English cartoonist into the mouth of the Emperor of Austria, when his Over-lord bade him walk over the bearskin.²³ There may yet be life in the Bear. And the Wise King would counsel the Pope against premature confidence:

“Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth
And let not thine heart be glad when he is overthrown,
Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him,
And he turn away his wrath from him.”²⁴

An uncertain gain among a semi-civilized Eastern peasantry is dearly bought at the price of the alienation of the conscience and mind of Europe. “Ce que je constate est que dans le monde entier la France c’est le catholicisme,” said M. Brunetière. Leo XIII bid for this great prize; Pius X threw it away; Benedict XV might have regained it, but has failed to do so. This is the tragedy,

²² Browning. Bishop Blougram’s Apology.

²³ Punch. March 27, 1918.

²⁴ Proverbs 24, 17, 18.

it may well be the final tragedy, of his well-intentioned but ill-starred reign.

“*Delicta majorum immeritus lues,
Romane, donec templa refeceris.*” ²⁵

The Church, if she would repair her fallen fortunes, must worship at her first shrines.

The author of *France*, Mr. Bodley, whose knowledge of that country is perhaps unique and who has always displayed a very friendly feeling for the Roman Catholic Church, sums up the situation:

“The enemies of the Church in France, always indefatigable, had an ally in the Vatican. From the moment when the Austrian Cardinal at the Conclave of 1903 vetoed the election to the papacy of Rampolla, who represented a policy conciliatory to France, the Vatican has been considered, rightly or wrongly, an Austro-German agency. But for Rampolla’s defeat, it is probable that that admirable instrument, the Concordat, would not have been abrogated, the rupture of which has removed the last trace of Gallicanism from the French Episcopate. The policy of the new Pope, elected in the first weeks of the war, has, justly or unjustly, persuaded impartial spectators, who have no love for anti-clericalism, that the Vatican desires and works for the victory of Germany and Austria, and the abasement of France, of Italy, and of England. The position of the French bishops is one of painful difficulty. Of patriotism beyond reproach, they are compelled by their dependence on the Holy See to express their loyalty to it, a dilemma of which the anti-clericals are not slow to take advantage. The sacrifice of life and limb and health made by thousands of the younger clergy have had their effect counteracted by the allegation that the clergy is a body primarily owing allegiance to a power which in the European conflict is hostile to France.” ²⁶

It is probable that the destiny of the Papacy will work itself out rather by detrition than by catastrophe;

²⁵ Horace. Odes iii, vi.

²⁶ The quotation is made, by the author’s kind permission, from a forthcoming work, *The Romance of the Battle Line in France*, by Mr. J. E. C. Bodley, Corresponding Member of the Institute of France.

the end is not, and will not be, yet. No human institution lives so successfully on a false reputation; so effectively disguises its losses and placards its gains. But the balance sheet is decisive. The future of Latin religion is a problem; that of Latin Catholicism, in its historical shape, is not. The divergence of principle between the Papacy and the modern State places the future of the Papacy beyond question: it "must decrease."